



# **Success Story**

Delaware District Office

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## **Niche Markets Drive Life Force Massage and Wellness Center's Success**

By Jayne Armstrong

Janice Mann possesses the key ingredient for entrepreneurial success: passion. The owner of Rehoboth's Life Force Massage and Wellness Center knows her customer base and continuously thinks outside the box to meet their needs.

A trained massage therapist, Mann started her business by offering a wider range of massage services than her competitors. While most massage businesses limit their services to Swedish and pain relief massages, Life Force expanded services include sports, pregnancy, shiatsu, geriatric, infant, myofascial, and neuromuscular, trigger point/deep tissue massages, reflexology and energy work.

Life Force's team approach to optimum health is the key to its success. The business is based on a total wellness concept focusing on the mind, body and spirit. Specialized massages and treatments help clients recovering from grief and loss, cancer, fibromyalgia, arthritis, sinus, diabetes, depression and anxiety, irritable bowel syndrome, and addictions. Life Force's staff includes an acupuncturist, hypnotherapist, aromatherapist, ear candling specialist and a psychotherapist.

Life Force's client base is extremely diverse: from infants to athletes as young as five years old to local lifeguards and Delaware State Police Academy cadets. A growing market segment is the hospice industry. Families often hire Life Force massage therapists to ease the pain of patients in the final stages of their lives.

Although most of its clients are local year-round and part-time residents, a large number of tourists purchase gift certificates for friends and family through Life Force's website, [www.lifeforcemassage.net](http://www.lifeforcemassage.net). The center also offers a wide variety of wellness products based on metaphysical, 12-step recovery, and mind, body and spirit wellness principles.

Like many small business owners, Mann has overcome adversity that strengthened her resolve as an entrepreneur. Extensive construction in downtown Rehoboth the past two years had an impact on the business' bottom line. She credits the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for getting her business back on track. A \$5,000 SBA Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) loan through Innovative Bank helped Life Force pay its operating expenses this spring, enabling it to survive the latest round of construction in front of the Rehoboth Avenue business.

San Francisco-based Innovative Bank finances small loans of \$5,000 to \$15,000 through a national SBA pilot program. The SOHO loan program is designed to give small businesses a shot in the arm when they need just a small amount of money to get the business off the ground. Rather than financing expenses through credit cards at higher interest rates, the businesses can repay the loan over seven years at a nine percent interest rate with an approximate monthly payment of \$83 for every \$5,000 borrowed.

The SOHO loan program also helps business owners build a track record for the business, positioning them for larger SBA loans at lower interest rates later. Because most banks won't finance small loans of this size, in the past many entrepreneurs were forced to secure financing through home equity loans. But that option does not benefit the business, because it doesn't contribute to building the business' credit history.

"It is a pleasure to work with such great business owners as Janice Mann in helping them to secure the financing they need to operate their businesses," said Sue Malone of Innovative Bank. "It is people such as Janice who are driving our economy. In the past 18 months we have funded over 5,000 small businesses nationwide similar to Life Force Massage and Wellness Center. Remember, small businesses are the next big businesses!"

While sales were off by 60 percent during the first two years of the construction, Life Force rebounded this past season and is now positioned to have its best year yet. The construction experience forced Mann to think outside the box and create affiliate businesses to survive.

Mann and her partner, Brenda Greene, created Serenity Publishing to support families coping with drug and alcohol recovery, financial debt and other addictions. The niche market features 12-step recovery cards written and designed by Mann and Greene. The products are marketed online through [www.serenitypublishing.net](http://www.serenitypublishing.net) and are sold wholesale and retail to stores in 14 states.

Mann also established [www.helpmewithmoney.com](http://www.helpmewithmoney.com), a website that helps consumers rebuild their credit. She serves as a third party marketer to financial services companies that offer credit repair services, credit cards and products to consumers.

Mann and Greene also created a kayaking tour company, Womyn on Water. The company hosts kayaking trips from the Delaware beaches to the lower Chesapeake. They offer a kayak tour-massage package to increase services and sales.

It is no wonder that Resort Beaches Women in Business (RBWIB) recognized Mann as one of its "diva achievas." The designation is reserved for members who demonstrate exceptional vision in their business success while contributing to the achievements of its other women members.

Mann is one of the founding members of RBWIB, a business networking group that has quickly grown to more than 300 members. By creating an "old girl network," RBWIB supports and empowers women entrepreneurs to build their businesses in a nurturing networking environment.

Mann encourages you to come in and get some healing bodywork in her wellness center. The Wellness Center is open Wednesday through Sunday during the autumn season. You can reach her by calling (302) 227-6818 or toll free at (866) 676-2437 and by email at [Jan@Lifeforcemassage.net](mailto:Jan@Lifeforcemassage.net).

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